

CATI model to be used in Delaware

By Mick Burke

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STURTEVANT - The Center for Advanced Technology and Innovation's business development method is catching on. CATI announced Thursday a contract with the state of Delaware's Economic Development Office to replicate the CATI program.

CATI Executive Director Matt Wagner said the contract also involves assessing 255 patents from Delaware-based DuPont Corp. and Hercules Inc. CATI, located at the Renaissance Business Park, will establish a new program to market and commercialize the patents through either starting new firms or helping existing firms grow.

"They were the only group that could not only partner with us to assess the merits of the technologies, but also establish a proactive program for marketing and licensing," Judy McKinney-Cherry, director of the State of Delaware's Economic Development Office, said in a news release.

The term "technology transfer" is at the heart of what CATI does. A private company with an unused patent offers it to CATI. CATI then matches the technologies with entrepreneurs who can turn them into new companies, or help existing companies expand.

The company that donates the patent retains ownership of the technology it created. Through licensing agreements, it reaps royalties, and CATI gets a percentage.

Wagner said the CATI team has finished assessing 105 patents from DuPont and Hercules. "We are now engaged in writing the business plan for the new program."

The new, \$212,000 Delaware contract means several things for the Racine area, he said. First, "From an image standpoint, CATI (born and raised in Racine) becomes known all across the country as a leader in this form of economic development. So it shows that Racine is cutting-edge in that respect."

Wagner said CATI's reputation is already beginning to build. In the last few months Wagner has received calls from top research and development executives "from some of the world's largest companies inquiring about working with us in Racine - not Chicago!" Secondly, he said, "We have already spotted some technologies in the Delaware patents that may hold promise for some Racine companies."

Finally, Wagner said, the money has already allowed CATI to hire a deputy director, which will allow it to help more local clients.

Without the contract, CATI would likely have never known about those patents. That will give local companies an advantage over their competition and may help them to grow, expand or even stay alive here, he said.

"And that only gets better if we know what's happening in Dallas, or Denver, etc," Wagner said.

One CATI goal is to create a larger national network so more unused, but late-stage patents can be shared through licensing.

A late-stage patent is one that has had much more research and development invested, he explained. Therefore, it is much closer to potentially being brought to market as a product - 18-24 months instead of perhaps 5-7 years.

CATI was formed in June 2001 as a private, non-profit entity by academic, work force development and economic development organizations in Southeastern Wisconsin. It has since garnered national recognition.

Its objective is to be a source of innovation for entrepreneurs, companies and students seeking new opportunities by harnessing the research and development engine of U.S. industry. CATI currently manages an intellectual property portfolio of patented technologies valued at nearly \$40 million.

On the Web: <http://www.thecati.com>

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